

## **Preliminary comments received during the Draft Southwest Neighborhood Plan Public Comment Period**

**January 21, 2015**

The DC Office of Planning (OP) will be receiving comments on the DRAFT Southwest Neighborhood Plan until the comment period closes on January 30, 2015. At the end of the comment period, OP will prepare a “Public Comment Digest” which is a public document submitted to Council as part of the full legislative package for the Southwest Neighborhood Plan. The Public Comment Digest will include all comments verbatim and acknowledgement of who submitted the comment. Additionally, OP will provide responses in the Public Comment Digest to each comment logged. This document is a general summary of the comments we have received in writing to date.

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### **Development, Sustainability, Urban Design**

- Strong support for not changing the existing land use designation of the Southeastern University Site, which is institutional.
- Ensure Flood maps reflect the installation of the 17th Street Levee.
- Provide compatible urban design recommendations for high-low designations. Ensure open green space surrounds new buildings.
- Promote SW as a “Modernist Gem”.
- Support existing locations for public services (police in same location, DMV, etc. in new buildings, with parking beneath) and ensure strong community input during the process.
- Ensure the approved St. Matthews PUD is in compliance with the Plan recommendations.
- Support for a mix of market rate, affordable and public housing for the future development of Greenleaf.

### **Connections, Transportation**

- Preserve the alignment of Delaware Avenue SW as it extends from the freeway/rail infrastructure.
- Ensure the “at grade” area for the full L’Enfant width of right of way (160’) is maintained.
- Include a diagram of DDOT’s planned improvements to South Capitol Street in the plan.
- Plan lacks clearer connections to near SE and the Wharf, both high-density with many amenities.
- Support opportunities for better connections, signage between green spaces.
- Desire for greater clarification on street restoration and/or expressed concern about the re-opening of streets.
  - Provide better definition of what the Plan means as “restoring the L’Enfant grid”
  - Identify what is meant by reopening – just bike and pedestrian or also vehicular; less support for vehicular.

- Ensure plan recommendations regarding street restoration and connections are all consolidated in one place in the plan so that everyone understands what is being proposed.
- Concern regarding the compatibility of the SW Plan and MoveDC plan. Some neighborhood residents do not support the reopening of some of the streets outlined in MoveDC which are not expressly called out in the SW Plan (although the SW Plan notes that it uses MoveDC as a foundation).
- Provide more guidance for each right of way reopening and consider its own unique characteristics.
- Support for restoring the street grid:
  - Provide more guidance to rebuild the street grid that was destroyed by the freeway and urban renewal. This neighborhood has less of an urban feel - many off street parking lots and dead end streets - than the rest of DC, and it would improve it a lot to rebuild it to its previous form, one that better matches the rest of DC.
  - Restore the street grid to improve bike connections.
- Support for Maine Avenue and M Streets as “boulevards,” – the main through streets of SW.
- Provide more guidance to transport larger numbers of residents and visitors throughout the SW Neighborhood.
- Improve east-west bike access along I, M, and P Streets and Maine Avenue. Improve bike and pedestrian access by reconnecting N Street and O Street between Canal and 4th and also connect K Street to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the circle on the north side of Delaware to G Street and rebuild 3rd Street south of M Street.
- Consider reconnecting H Street through the area in the long term as well as reconnecting Delaware north of the study to improve bike connectivity.
- Include Van Ness Elementary in “Safe Routes to Schools”.

### **Housing Affordability/Housing Types**

- Provide better guidance for where low income and workforce housing, family-sized housing (townhomes), and disabled and elderly housing may be located in the planning area.
- Define the level of income for eligibility for affordable housing.
- Define affordable to ensure current residents of SW are not excluded. For residential requirements, 20% “affordable” for 20 years is too low; desire for more permanent affordable housing.
- Housing also needs a strong definition of “affordable”.
- Recommendations fall short of providing housing appropriate for families. Family- style housing, something that was echoed over and over during EVERY public meeting, is lacking from all of OP’s recommendations.

### **Parks, Green Space, Recreation**

- Prevent new development on the Randall Recreation site.

- Consider relocating Lansburgh Park to be more geographically central to SW, especially after Greenleaf is redeveloped. Improve access between parks as a “necklace”, and ensure churches and mini-parks on 4th Street are included.
- Ensure the Randall Recreation Center includes both the buildings and the playing fields.
- Prevent any loss of greenspace in Southwest.
- Make sure that references to Randall in the plan are correct and be aware of distinctions between the Recreation Center and the Park.

#### **Retail, 4th Street, Arts and Culture**

- Ensure retail recommendations truly enliven commercial areas.
- Consider Amidon-Bowen and Jefferson Schools and the new library for arts activities.
- Discourage the use of spaces along M Street as arts incubators.
- Expand the Town Center to include M Street between 4th and South Capitol as a commercial and pedestrian boulevard, a main walkway to and from baseball and new soccer stadium events, with local retailers, subsidized if necessary, and services (e.g., barber shop, bakery, coffee shop, post office, hardware store, bank, small restaurants).
- Add benches and mini-parks to 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW.
- Promote retail, entertainment and cultural opportunities on M Street SW especially where M and 4th Streets intersect.
- Ensure that local small businesses can be eligible for local subsidies.
- Discourage big box retail on South Capitol street sites.

#### **Editing, Maps, Images**

- Improve the shot looking north along South Capitol Street to a vantage point far closer to the freeway and railroad bridges. Change photo of South Capitol Street to better reflect existing character.
- Provide a location diagram to show the vantage point of the Capitol Power Plant which is not all that clear in the context where that image appears.
- Remove an illustration that includes bike lanes in the door zone to prevent collisions and injuries when drivers open their doors.
- Rename "Friends of the Southwest Duck Pond" to "Neighbors of Southwest Duck Pond."
- Include the Age-Friendly Focus Group in the projects timeline.